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VIVA 'VALLARTA'
PACIFIC PARADISE IS A WELCOMING HAVEN IN WINTER {page 11}

SWEDISH COOL
HOLLYWOOD SAYS 'JA' TO ALL THINGS SCANDINAVIAN {page 9}

LONDON metro®
Wednesday, December 21, 2011
www.metronews.ca
News worth sharing.

HIV vaccine a huge advance: UWO scientist

U.S. clinical trials could lead to first preventative vaccine for virus Patents already secured in more than 70 countries

ANGELA MULLINS
@METRONEWS.CA

Yong Kang has played a role in developing vaccines for polio and hepatitis B. Now, the University of Western Ontario researcher has earned approval from the U.S. government to start human clinical trials on what could be a breakthrough vaccination for HIV.

The vaccine —named SAV001 — is the result of nearly 20 years' work at Western labs.

Kang, a molecular virologist, started studying the way HIV reproduces after landing in London during the early 1990s. About 10 years ago, he turned his focus toward developing a vaccine — something he thought would be relatively simple.

ANGELA MULLINS/METRO

▶ Yong Kang talks on Tuesday at the UWO research park about his team's HIV/AIDS vaccine.

"Turns out, it was a very challenging problem," he said.

With the first of three trial phases set to begin in January, Kang's product could be on the market in as little as five years. His vaccine goes at the whole virus instead of attacking bits and pieces, which is how vaccines in previous HIV trials worked.

The vaccine — billed by Western as the only HIV vaccine being developed in Canada — will be produced at plants in Maryland and Colorado with funding from Sumagen. The Korean-based pharmaceutical company established its Canadian headquarters at Western's research park in 2008 and has pumped about $50 million into Kang's research.

If the vaccine earns approval for distribution, Kang hopes it can be produced in Canada. Right now, he said, Canada doesn't have a plant that meets the biosafety requirement.

Kang, who also is developing a treatment for hepatitis C, was grinning from ear-to-ear on Tuesday as the upcoming trials were announced at UWO.

While HIV has been his key subject for many years, he said there is no one thing that drew him to the disease, except maybe the number of people it affects.

"I like to save lives," he said. "I think we can save millions."

▶ Members of Occupy London parade a tent across Wellington Street during a Tuesday march downtown.

ANGELA MULLINS/METRO

Under the big tent: Occupiers vs. free trade

The march was meant to raise awareness about CETA — a free-trade agreement being negotiated between Canada and the European Union. Members of the movement, joined Tuesday by representatives from the Council of Canadians, are opposed to the trade deal, saying it would have a negative impact on everything from public water to health care. **More coverage, page 2.**

1 news

The city and UnLondon, a local digital media community group, have announced the winners of London's first open data contest. Scan code for story.

1 Download the free ScanLife app with your smartphone at 2dscan.com

2 Use your smartphone to scan 2D barcodes in Metro

3 The codes will direct your mobile browser to m.metronews.ca

On the web at metronews.ca

Twitter's digital swear jar aims to turn your salty tweets into charitable donations. More at metronews.ca/video

Follow us on Twitter @themetrolondon

Police officer performs CPR, saving infant

A quick-thinking London police officer has saved a baby boy.

Last Saturday afternoon, police responded to a call of a child not breathing at a Trafalgar Street address. A 14-month-old infant had inadvertently ingested his mother's medication and was without any vital signs.

Const. Greg Bailey immediately performed CPR on the child until EMS arrived about two minutes later. The infant was transported to London Health Science Centre where emergency efforts were continued. LHSC staff and EMS said that as a result of the immediate CPR initiated by Bailey, the child has been released from hospital and is expected to make a full recovery. METRO

Woman charged with being accessory in murder

An 18-year-old Hamilton woman has been charged in an investigation into the stabbing death of a man in Cambridge. Madison Doyle has been charged with accessory after the fact to murder. Joseph Batten died in hospital after police found the 22-year-old severely injured at the Masonic Lodge in Cambridge early Saturday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Occupy London makes voice heard, again

After more than month-long silence, occupiers take to downtown streets One participant says group is getting more organized

ANGELA MULLINS
@METRONEWS.CA

ANGELA MULLINS/METRO

Members of the Occupy London movement make their way up an escalator at Citi Plaza on Tuesday during a more than one-hour march through downtown. The march was meant to raise awareness about CETA — a free-trade agreement being negotiated between Canada and the European Union.

Carrying a tent over their heads, about 20 members of Occupy London led police and city bylaw officers on a winding march through downtown Tuesday.

The more than hour-long trek went through Citi Plaza, through City Centre and stopped briefly at city hall. It ended shortly after 2 p.m., when a marcher parked a minivan outside 231 Dundas St., tied the tent to the van's roof and started handing out literature to raise awareness about the Canada-European Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement.

Dubbed CETA, opponents warn the agreement could have a variety of negative impacts, including the privatization of municipal water systems.

Mike Roy, a strong supporter of Occupy London since the movement started in October, said the march and occupation of a parking spot accomplished multiple goals.

"We handed out a box full of literature (about CETA). Hopefully, a couple of people will read it and find out what CETA's all about," Roy said. "We also showed the excess of the police department and their watchful eyes on us."

Several police officers — some on foot and at least one in a cruiser — trailed behind Tuesday's march. Once it stopped, police, along with bylaw officers, watched from several hundred feet away as the tent was attached to the vehicle.

Roy said occupiers had planned to simply setup their tent in a Dundas Street parking spot and hand literature to people passing by. But, when protesters began gathering outside the Covent Garden Market about noon, city officials told them they would be fined if they overtook a parking spot.

At that point, the march was organized, Roy said, admitting it was meant to be a bit of an annoyance for the city officials who followed. Orest Katolyk, the city's bylaw enforcement manager, was among the people along for the ride.

A city bylaw prohibits placing an "object" or "structure upon, under or over (the) street." That includes parking spaces, and one person was fined during the march for standing in a spot, Katolyk said.

The protesters weren't ticketed for pitching the tent on the vehicle.

$520
The fine for placing a "structure" or "object" in city streets, including parking spaces, according to city bylaw officers.

"Our concern is if you stand ... (in) parking spaces, that's a safety issue," Katolyk said.

Standing on the sidewalk and handing out literature, he said, is not a concern.

Libro Financial Group announces new president

Stephen Bolton has been named Libro Financial Group's new president and CEO, effective Feb. 1.

Bolton started his career at Libro as a loans officer in 1988.

He also worked as administrative farm loans supervisor, and branch manager in Arkona and Watford before becoming vice-president of sales and service delivery in 1995. METRO

Bolton in charge

- With Bolton at the helm, Libro has expanded branch delivery to 15 from nine branches.

Stephen Bolton

News in brief

Ethan, Olivia top name list

Ontario residents love their Ethans and Olivias. The provincial government says they are the most popular names in the province are Emma, Isabella, Sophia and Ava.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Auto fraud leads to mischief charges

A 43-year-old London man faces multiple charges of mischief after a police investigation into auto-related fraud. Since August, a suspect has been disabling the fuel pump system on older model Chevrolet Venture and Pontiac Montana vans and waiting for the owners to return. He then offers to fix the vehicles for money. METRO

Business Cares drive hoping for last-minute surge

Effort to help London Food Bank has met goal for past 12 years Organizers now hoping for best-case scenario

ANGELA MULLINS
@METRONEWS.CA

Standing at 60 per cent of its goal, the Business Cares Food Drive is in the final leg.

People have until the end of Wednesday to donate money or non-perishable food to the cause, which benefits the London Food Bank. This year's goal is to collect one more pound than last year — bringing the tally to about 228,000.

Organizer Wayne Dunn was a bit more upbeat about the campaign Tuesday than he was at the end of last week.

Based on a Friday count, the drive stood at about 30 per cent of the goal. By Tuesday afternoon, Dunn was reporting about 60 per cent.

"I'm cautiously optimistic," he said, about reaching 100 per cent. "We have truck after truck after truck coming in (with donations)."

Dunn said it's hard to say if things are moving slower this year than in the past. Given increased demand at the food bank, organizers would like to exceed the goal by upwards of six per cent, Dunn said.

The donations will be delivered to the food bank Thursday morning.

How to help

- Donations can be dropped off at Aboutown, 17 York St., or County Heritage, 1275 Hubrey Rd.
- To arrange a pickup, call 519-686-7573.

Lucky. In love

▶ Lottery winner Norma Baker gets a kiss from husband Bob at London Health Sciences Centre's Victoria Hospital after receiving her cheque Tuesday for the grand prize in the Win a Million Lottery.

COURTESY/LONDON HEALTH SCIENCES FOUNDATION

Retirement much sweeter with jackpot

Norma is a retired University of Western Ontario librarian and Bob is retired from London Life. Both in their 70s, they have two children and four granddaughters.

Major blaze at marina storage

65 Number of boats believed to be stored in the structure, and possibly some antique vehicles as well.

More than 50 firefighters from five stations, along with a fire boat from Michigan, were battling a major blaze at a marina storage building in Port Lambton. The fire at Coopmans Marina on Old River Road broke out just after 7 a.m. Tuesday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Premiers express dismay over health negotiations

Premiers who feel slighted by the federal government on health-care funding expressed their frustration Tuesday at Ottawa's tone and position in what they thought were supposed to be negotiations on a long-term deal.

Ontario Finance Minister Dwight Duncan challenged Flaherty's assertion that the deal Ottawa brought to Victoria offers the provinces a clear understanding on the amount of money they can expect for years to come by linking funding increases to the rate of nominal gross domestic product.

"Mr. Flaherty talked about clarity. There's no clarity when you tie funding to GDP, which goes up and down, so there's absolutely no more clarity," he said on Tuesday. "That's just nonsense."

At Monday's meeting, Flaherty said Ottawa plans to continue increasing health transfer payments at six per cent annually for the next six years. After that, he said transfer payments will be tied to the rate of economic growth and inflation, which gives the provinces and territories certain and stable health funding.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Arrests made in Montreal mafia slaying

Six men were arrested Tuesday in connection with the slaying of a powerful Mob boss who once led a New York City crime family.

One of those nabbed was Raynald Desjardins, a dominant figure in Montreal with past ties to the city's Rizzuto mafia clan.

Desjardins, 59, and three other people are facing first-degree murder charges in the November death of alleged mafia boss Salvatore Montagna, the head of New York's notorious Bonanno crime family. THE CANADIAN PRESS

White. Christmas

▶ Kevin Wesson shovels a path for customers at the Water Still in Amarillo, Texas, on Tuesday morning after an overnight storm covered the region with about an inch of ice and snow. Several major thoroughfares were closed after the storm clipped the northwest part of the state the day before the official start of winter.

MICHAEL SCHUMACHER//AMARILLO GLOBE-NEWS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Stormy weather takes States by surprise

Fierce winds and snow that caused fatal accidents and shuttered highways in five states crawled deeper into the central U.S. early Tuesday, with forecasters warning that pre-holiday travel would be difficult if not impossible across the region. Authorities said six people have died as a result of the bad weather.

Bishop in child-porn case apologizes

Septuagenarian cleric says addiction to porn went against his moral principles Tells sentencing hearing that he secretly wished to be found out and was relieved to be caught

SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Bishop Raymond Lahey arrives at court in Ottawa last May.

A disgraced Roman Catholic bishop who got busted with hundreds of pornographic photos of young boys says he's sorry.

Speaking in public for the first time since he got caught at the Ottawa airport in 2009, Raymond Lahey offered an apology to the church and to victims of child pornography.

"I am truly sorry for what I have done," Lahey told the court on Tuesday, the second day of his sentencing hearing.

The 71-year-old cleric, looking gaunt and frail, said his addiction to Internet porn went against his moral principles.

"I know that I've done wrong."

The court heard Lahey's collection included pornographic photos featuring Catholic imagery, including young boys wearing crucifixes and rosary beads engaged in sex acts, and a man dressed as a monk hitting a young boy's bare buttocks with a paddle.

There were also graphic images of bondage and torture.

"They are graphic in the extreme," Crown attorney David Elhadad said of Lahey's collection of child porn.

Lahey sat with his arms crossed as the judge and the lawyers looked at photos from his collection.

Later, he offered some insight into his actions.

"Deep down, I desired to be found out," Lahey told the court. "Being discovered coming through customs was a blessing in disguise." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lahey sentencing

- Lahey will be sentenced Jan. 4 on one count of importing child pornography.
- He voluntarily went to jail last spring to begin serving time even before his formal sentencing.
- A second charge of simple possession remains against Lahey, but it is expected to be withdrawn as part of the plea deal when he is formally sentenced.
- A psychiatrist has told the court that testing suggests the bishop is not a pedophile.

Texting untrustworthy: Study

RYAN REMIORZ/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Text messaging may be a more convenient mode of communication, but it may lead people to be more deceitful, according to a new study by UBC researchers.

The study involved 170 student brokers and buyers performing mock stock transactions in one of four ways: face-to-face or video, audio, or text chatting.

Researchers found that participants who received information via text message were 95 per cent more likely to report deception than if they had interacted via video; 31 per cent more likely to report deception compared to face-to-face; and 18 per cent more likely to report deception than audio. UBC professor Ronald Cenfetelli, co-author of the paper, said he was surprised that people's reaction at being lied to differed depending on the medium.

KENDRA WONG IN VANCOUVER

News in brief

Tories explain election error

The Conservative Party of Canada says there's an honest explanation for why it directed an Ontario woman to vote at the wrong polling station during the last federal election.

Carolyn Siopiolosz had complained to Elections Canada that she received a phone call a few days before the May 2 election telling her she was to vote at a polling station in downtown Kitchener rather than St. Clements, Ont., the town where she lived.

But a spokesman says it was simply a matter of human error. The voter's information was listed twice in the party's database under two different ridings, and she was directed to the wrong riding location.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Indonesia's punks resist crackdown

Mohawks buzzed and noses free of piercings, dozens of youths march in military-style for hours beneath Indonesia's tropical sun — part of efforts by authorities to restore moral values and bring the "deviants" back into the mainstream.

But the young men and women have shown no signs of bending.

When commanders turn their backs, the shouts ring out: "Punk will never die!" Fists are thrown in the air and peace signs flashed. A few have managed briefly to escape, heads held high as they are dragged back.

Sixty-five young punk rockers arrived at this police detention centre last week after baton-wielding police crashed a concert in Aceh — the only province in this predominantly Muslim nation of 240 million to have imposed Islamic laws.

They will be released Friday, after completing 10 days of "rehabilitation," from classes on good behaviour and religion to military-style drills aimed at instilling discipline.

HERI JUANDA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ An inscription on a pair of slippers sitting outside a mosque at a police school in Aceh, Indonesia.

Yudi, 19, who goes by only one name, says it's not working.

He tried unsuccessfully to shake off police when they took an electric razor to his spiky mohawk. At the sight of his hair scattered in the grass, he recalls, tears rolled down his face.

"They can't change me," he insisted. "I love punk. I don't feel guilty about my lifestyle. Why should I? There's nothing wrong with it."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Aceh's autonomy

- The crackdown marked the latest effort by authorities to promote strict moral values in Aceh, which, unlike other provinces in the sprawling archipelagic nation, enjoys semiautonomy from the central government.
- That was part of a peace deal negotiated after the 2004 tsunami off Aceh convinced separatist rebels and the army to lay down their arms.

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Egyptian women call for change

Military issues statement of regret for violations against women Clinton slams Egypt's security forces

Around 10,000 women marched through central Cairo demanding Egypt's ruling military step down Tuesday in an unprecedented show of outrage over soldiers who dragged women by the hair and stomped on them, and stripped one half-naked in the street during a fierce crackdown on activists over the past week.

The dramatic protest, which grew as the women marched from Tahrir Square through downtown, was fuelled by the widely circulated images of abuses of women. Many of the marchers touted the photo of the young woman whose clothes were partially pulled off by troops, baring her down to her blue bra, as she struggled on the ground.

"Tantawi stripped your women naked, come join us," the crowd chanted to passersby, referring to Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi, the head of the military council that has ruled Egypt since the Feb. 11 fall of Hosni Mubarak. "The daughters of Egypt are a red line, they chanted.

The military council in a statement affirmed "its respect and total appreciation" for women and their right to protest and take part in political life. It promised it was taking measures to punish those responsible for violations.

The statement suggested the military's fear that attacks on women could wreck its prestige at home and abroad, which has already been heavily eroded by its fierce, five-day-old crackdown on pro-democracy protesters demanding it surrender power.

The ruling generals have campaigned to keep the public on its side in the confrontation, depicting the activists as hooligans and themselves as the honourable protectors of the nation, above reproach.

In a possibly significant hint of new flexibility, the military council also said in its statement Tuesday that it was prepared to discuss any initiatives to help the security of the country. In recent days, a number of political factions have pressed the military to hand over power by February, rather than June, when it promised to hold presidential elections.

The images of the half-stripped protester, whose identity is not known, clearly had a powerful resonance.

A banner showing a photo of her on the asphalt — one soldier yanking up her black robes and shirt, another poised to stomp on her chest — was put up in Tahrir Square for passing drivers to see.

"The girl dragged around is just like my daughter," said Um Hossam, a 54-year old woman in traditional black dress and a headscarf at Tuesday's march. "I am a free woman, and attacking this woman or killing protesters is just like going after one of my own children."

Ringed by a protective chain of men, the women marched from Tahrir to the Journalists' Syndicate, several blocks away, chanting slogans demanding the military council step down.

Two sisters, Yomna and Tasneem Shams, said they never took part in previous protests because their parents wouldn't allow them. But they happened to be downtown Tuesday and spontaneously joined the women's march.

"No one should ever be beaten for expressing their opinion," Yomna, 19, said. "I am proud I took part in today's protest. I feel I can tell my kids I have done something for them in the future."

Some also criticized Islamic parties, which stayed out of the anti-military protests and did not participate in Tuesday's march.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Scare tactics?

- **Many accused the military** of intentionally targeting women to scare them and their male relatives from joining protests against the generals.
- **Previously, the military** has implied women who joined protests were of loose morals.
- **In March,** soldiers subjected detained female protesters to humiliating tests to determine if they were virgins.
- **"They want** to break their dignity so that they don't go out and protest," Maha Abdel-Nasser, an engineer who joined the march, said.

AMR NABIL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Women march during a protest against the crackdown by authorities on protesters in Cairo Tuesday.

Topless protesters abducted

A Ukrainian organization of topless women activists says three of its members were abducted by security officers during a protest against Belarus' authoritarian president, beaten, humiliated and left naked in a forest.

The group, called Femen, is widely known in Ukraine and neighbouring countries for its demonstrations in which women bare their breasts to draw attention to an array of causes. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PIER PAOLO CITO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ A Femen activist during a protest in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Nov. 6.

RESEARCH IN MOTION

Porn access on BlackBerry a concern in Britain

BlackBerry maker Research In Motion has been summoned to a meeting with the United Kingdom's telecommunications regulator amid concern that children are able to view pornography on its smartphones.

The London Telegraph reports that the problem appears to be unique to the BlackBerry, which has become increasingly popular among young users. RIM will be joined at the meeting by representatives of Britain's leading mobile networks.

While mobile phone operators have been able to apply filters to other handsets such as the iPhone, they have been unable to do so on the BlackBerry because data flows through its own services rather than those provided by the networks. RIM reportedly offered its filtering system to U.K. networks, but the offer has only been taken up by T-Mobile. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market moment

PRICES AS OF 5 P.M. TUESDAY

TSX	Dollar	Oil	Natural gas	Gold
+ 177.18 (11,716.88)	+ 0.79¢ (97.06¢ US)	+ 3.34¢ US ($97.22 US)	$3.128 US (+ 3.2¢ US)	$1,617.60 US (+ $20.90 US)

Inflation still high: StatsCan

DANNY JOHNSTON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Grocery prices were up 5.7 per cent in November compared with a year ago as consumers saw double-digit increases for such basics as fresh vegetables and bread, Statistics Canada reported Tuesday.

Prices rose in all areas the agency tracks across the country

Canada's annual inflation rate remained stubbornly high at 2.9 per cent last month as Canadians continued to pay considerably more for food and gasoline than they had 12 months earlier.

Statistics Canada said Tuesday that grocery prices were up 5.7 per cent in November compared with a year ago as consumers saw double-digit increases for such basics as fresh vegetables and bread. The figures included a 1.3 per cent jump from October alone. Food prices, including restaurant meals, were 4.8 per cent higher than a year earlier, the biggest such increase since July 2009, the federal agency said.

Gasoline also continued to be a key driver of annual inflation, rising 13.5 per cent in November from 12 months earlier. However, gasoline price inflation is on a downward track after peaking in May at close to 30 per cent. On a month-to-month basis, Canadians actually paid 2.3 per cent less for gas in November than they did in October.

"I think inflation may have more staying power than we expect."
DOUGLAS PORTER, BMO DEPUTY CHIEF ECONOMIST

The high cost of gasoline helped push the transportation component up 5.7 per cent, although that was less than the 6.7 per cent gain recorded in October.

Despite this, the Bank of Canada has repeatedly stressed that it is not worried about inflation even though it has remained above the bank's two per cent target for more than a year. THE CANADIAN PRESS

LONDON TRANSIT NEWS

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S EVE SERVICE

Christmas Day December 25 (Sunday)

For Christmas Day, December 25 the following routes will operate on special schedules:

1 Kipps Lane
2 Dundas
3 Hamilton Rd.
4 Oxford East
6 Richmond
7 Wavell
9C Whitehills
15 Westmount
16 Adelaide
20 Cherryhill
21 Huron Heights

The following routes will operate on a regular Sunday/Holiday schedules:

5 Springbank
10 Wonderland
11 Southcrest
12 Wharncliffe
13 Wellington
14 Highbury
17 Oxford West
26 Jalna

On December 27 and January 2 all routes will operate on Saturday schedule

Boxing Day, December 26 (Monday)

For December 26, all routes operating on Sunday (except 2 Dundas and 13 Wellington) will operate on regular Sunday/Holiday schedule. Routes 2 Dundas and 13 Wellington will use a special schedule with extra buses.

Free New Year's Eve Service After 8 pm

London Transit will be offering free rides from 8 pm through 1 am on New Year's Eve. All routes normally operating at 11 pm will be extended to 1 am.

Separate Christmas and New Year's Eve schedules will be available after December 15 at both LTC locations (main office at 450 Highbury Avenue and downtown Ticket Office at 150 Dundas Street) and online at www.ltconline.ca.

my bus info
www.ltconline.ca 519-455-1347

London Transit wishes you and yours a safe and happy holiday!

RIP FEARLESS HITCHENS

JUST SAYIN' ...

PAUL SULLIVAN
METRO

It's tough, writing an appreciation of Christopher Hitchens, the brilliant essayist and author of God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything and the memoir Hitch 22, to name a couple.

Hitchens died last week, and an impressive array of pundits have tried to punch above their weight and write about Hitchens as well as Hitchens wrote about himself.

The results have been admirable, although we could do without the manly memoirs from those who tried to match the master drink for drink and stay on their barstools. Typical of this school is Graydon Carter, the editor of Vanity Fair, who wrote that after having more drinks at lunch than most of us have in a lifetime at lunch, they stumbled back to the office and Hitchens "produced a 1,000-word column of near perfection in under half an hour."

"When you're a writer, intellectual freedom is your most precious resource. Unless you write the truth (as you know it, in your heart) with complete fearlessness, you are producing weasel poop."

The other unsettling thing about the coverage is that it's universally by guys about a guy. Hitchens famously maintained that women aren't funny, and as far as I can tell, most women continue to hold that against him.

Otherwise, just about everything you could ever say, hope to say or imagine that someone, someday might say has been written about Christopher Hitchens. So why bother to add to the pile?

Maybe it's because, as Carter writes, "you felt as though he was writing to you and to you alone." We all had a front row seat to The Show thanks to Hitchens, who would tackle any topic on our behalf, from Mother Teresa, whom he detested as the benign, loving face of oppression, to Holocaust denier David Irving, tolerating him and his odious outlook in the name of intellectual freedom.

When you're a writer, intellectual freedom is your most precious resource. Unless you write the truth (as you know it, in your heart) with complete fearlessness, you are producing weasel poop. At best.

Hitchens was completely fearless. He proved it time and again, but most of all when he turned his back on the left to support the U.S. invasion of Iraq, arguing that "Islamofascism" is the greatest threat of our time. It started when the Ayatollah of Iran put a fatwah (a kind of assassination contract with religious trappings) on his good friend Salman Rushdie for writing The Satanic Verses.

If it weren't three sentences long, this quote about the fatwah from his memoir should be written on his tomb: "It was, if I can phrase it like this, a matter of everything I hated versus everything I loved. In the hate column: dictatorship, religion, stupidity, demagogy, censorship, bullying and intimidation. In the love column: literature, irony, humour, the individual and the defense of free expression."

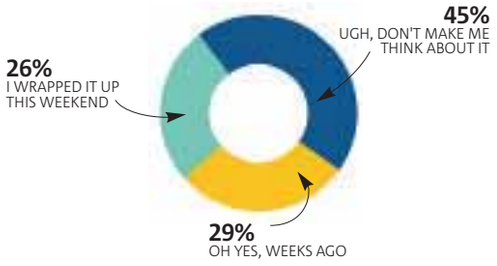
Christopher Hitchens, wherever you are, let 'er RIP.

Read more of Paul Sullivan's columns at metronews.ca/justsaying

Panel

Register at metropolitanpanel.ca and take the quick poll

Five days left. Have you finished your shopping?



Local tweets

- **@Raceway Filly:** Great work #LDNont, I'm in the Christmas mood after dropping off the last of the TOY DRIVE DONATIONS to the #Salvation Army! MERRY CHRISTMAS
- **@Styeiles:** Some loser told me I was selfish for having kids. #thatswhatoldfatpeopletellthemselfstosleepatnight, #ldnont
- **@JeffHernaez:** This is a throwback to first year - MC exam in the Thames Hall gym. #uwo #exams #law2101
- **@naomisayers00:** You know what warms my heart? The fact that youth, students & other FN stepped up to help #Attawapiskat promptly, no questions asked. #uwo
- **@RobGood92:** Sure #uwo, testing the ucc fire alarm at 7 in the morning during exams is a great idea, its not distracting me at all #whatsthebigidea?
- **@bad_subject:** In Oakville, a girl walks towards me wearing next to nothing. "Reminds me of #ldnont" I say, then I notice: her shirt reads 'U.W.O." WELP
- **@379collective:** Happy Hanukkah, #ldnont!

SHIKHEI GOH/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Hang in there, bug!

Fly battles rain to win contest

WILDLIFE. It looks like one of those classic, endearing "Hang in there, baby" motivational posters. This dragonfly in Indonesia's Riau Islands seems to cling on to a reed to brave a torrent of rain. The photo by Shikhei Goh beat 20,000 entries to win the 2011 National Geographic Photography Contest. MWN

"It suddenly rained, but the lighting was just superb. The result caused me to be overjoyed."
SHIKHEI GOH, PHOTOGRAPHER

Judges' views

- **Amy Toensing:** "When I look at it, I want to say, 'Hold on tight, little buddy!'"
- **Peter Essick"** "It's rare indeed to see a photograph that causes the viewer to feel a bond with a member of the animal world seemingly, but maybe not, so unlike our own."

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A Swedish invasion

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo has spurred a demand for Scandinavian backdrops in new films ◗ But that's nothing new to Hollywood ◗ Sweden has always been a cinema focal point

IN FOCUS

RICHARD CROUSE
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

These days it seems there are almost as many movies set in Sweden as there are Billy bookshelves in college dorms. The original Girl with the Dragon Tattoo books and movie series kicked off a thirst for all things Scandinavian.

Headhunters, a Norwegian noir, was a big hit recently at the Toronto International Film Festival and Let the Right One In placed vampires against a snowy, stark white Swedish backdrop.

This weekend the Americanized version of Girl With the Dragon Tattoo opens, starring Daniel Craig and Rooney Mara in the roles Swedish superstars Michael Nyqvist and Noomi Repace made famous. Shot in Sweden, the movie promises open landscapes, the crunch of snow underfoot and even the odd fjord.

Suddenly, it seems people are hungry for movies from Sweden, Norway and Denmark, but there has always been a smorgasbord of cinema available from that part of the world.

HANDOUT

▶ The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo has set off a demand for all things Scandinavian.

No discussion of Scandinavian cinema can be complete without mentioning Ingmar Bergman. Woody Allen named him "the greatest film artist since the invention of the motion picture camera," and Francis Ford Coppola called him "my all-time favourite."

If you haven't seen The Seventh Seal or Wild Strawberries, you should; they are both classics. But you have undoubtedly seen movies inspired by or parodying Bergman's work.

His famous Seventh Seal scene of Death playing chess has been mimicked in everything from Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey to Woody Allen's play Death Knocks, which features a man playing gin rummy with Death.

More recently a Norwegian mockumenary called Troll Hunter earned praise from critics all over the world. One writer said this Blair-Witch-style story of cave-dwelling trolls and the government-sponsored hunters who track them was "destined to be a classic of its kind."

Another said, "You'll want to catch this clever movie before Hollywood ruins everything with a dumb remake."

Denmark has a thriving film industry. Since 1956 they've entered 40 flicks for Best Foreign Film consideration at the Academy Awards.

At last year's Oscars Susanne Bier's drama In a Better World beat Canada's entry Incendies to take home Best Foreign Film.

The best-known Danish films of recent years have been made by Lars von Trier, the distinctive and controversial director of Breaking the Waves and this year's Melancholia. As well known for his depressed behaviour as he is for his films, Von Trier once said, "Basically, I'm afraid of everything in life, except filmmaking."

Movie reviews

See it twice ◍◍◍◍◍ | See it now ◍◍◍◍ Worth watching ◍◍◍ | Yawn ◍◍ | Don't bother ◍

THE ADVENTURES OF TINTIN

Genre: Drama
Director: Steven Spielberg
◍◍◍½

HANDOUT

Based on three of Hergé's original Tintin books, The Adventures of Tintin is a long series of clues strung together to form the story and connect the action scenes. But despite the well-loved characters and Andy Serkis's brilliant work, this is a Steven Spielberg movie through and through.

Using a mix of motion capture and CGI he is finally able to recreate the giant set pieces he has always been fond of in boldface.

The motorcycle chase through a North African town, a plane crash in the desert and a swashbuckling flashback are all spectacular, exhilarating sequences, but they feel more Spielbergian than Tintin-ian.

I'm not sure if Hergé purists will appreciate the director's vision imposed on their beloved characters but for everyone else The Adventures of Tintin is good, escapist fun.

RICHARD CROUSE

London

- **RAINBOW CINEMAS LONDON:** (PG) Wed-Thu 1:10-3:40-7:20-9:40
- **WELLINGTON 8 CINEMAS:** (PG) Wed-Thu 6:50-9:30
- **CINEPLEX ODEON WESTMOUNT AND VIP CINEMAS:** (PG) No Passes Wed-Thu 7-9:45
- **SILVERCITY LONDON:** (PG) No Passes Wed-Thu 11:30-12-2:40-5-5:20-7:50-10:40

2 scene

Not dead

False reports of Jon Bon Jovi's death spread online after a fake news release surfaced on social media sites. Bon Jovi released a statement Tuesday showing that he is very much still alive.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Judge shifts legal, other expenses from executors of Michael Jackson's estate

Was James Franco a D-student?

James Franco

Former New York University professor Jose Angel Santana claims the school fired him for giving James Franco a D, and he's suing to get his job back, according to the New York Post. Santana claims the low grade was due to Franco missing 12 out of 14 classes, though he says the school sided with their famous student.

"In my opinion, they've turned the NYU graduate film degree into swag for James Franco's purposes, a possession, something you can buy," Santana tells the newspaper.

"The University has done everything in its power to curry favour with James Franco."

METRO

Celebrity tweets

Death to LOL

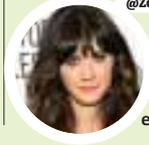
@BrunoMars

@oliviawilde

Is it wrong that the only time I've been in the gym in the last month is to buy peanut butter smoothies? I try my best to lunge in and out.

@michaelianblack

If anybody (Jude Law) wants to trade lives with me, NO THANK YOU!!! (yes, please)


@ZooeyDeschanel

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Demi Moore

Demi Moore wants to empower you

The Conversation, Demi Moore's new talk show on which she serves as the Executive Producer, is on schedule to air next month on Lifetime with British TV personality Amanda De Cadenet as host.

The Conversation, which claims to be about empowering women, has already nabbed such guests as Lady Gaga, Gwyneth Paltrow, Olivia Wilde and Jane Fonda.

Apparently, they plan on "empowering women" by asking these extremely successful women such questions as "What is your favourite sex position?" and "What do you lie about?"

Maybe instead of such inane questions, The Conversation would empower females better if these celebs talked to women about the importance of education, birth control, and how to fight sexism in the work place.

Besides, everyone knows that for Gwyneth Paltrow, the answer is "missionary."

DOROTHY ROBINSON

Lady and the Trump

Just how has Lady Gaga become the global sensation she is today? Why, taste-maker Donald Trump, of course

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

THE WORD

DOROTHY ROBINSON
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

Toupéed reality TV star Donal Trump says because Lady Gaga performed at the 2008 Miss Universe pageant, which Trump owns, he should get all of the credit for her success.

"We always have an entertainer," he says.

"We've had a lot of great people, and you don't pay them anything because it's one of the biggest audiences and my people told me, 'Nobody knows who she is but there's this woman with good talent named Lady Gaga.'

And I said, 'Give me a break.' And then they said, 'She's really good.' So I said, 'I don't care, if you like her, put her on.'"

Interesting. And here we always thought it was the gays who propelled Lady Gaga to international stardom.

Lady Gaga

Did Donald Trump also discover Key West?

Donald Trump

I ain't got you babe: Chaz and his fiancée split

After featuring their tear-filled proposal on his reality series, Being Chaz, Chaz Bono and Jennifer Elia have split up, calling off their engagement, according to TMZ.

"They leave this relationship with great love, respect and affection toward one another.

No further amplification will be forthcoming and they ask that you respect their privacy at this time," says a rep for the former Dancing with the Stars contestant.

METRO

Jennifer Elia, left, and Chaz Bono

Tired of the dreariness of winter and in need of some sunshine? Welcome to Mexico's seaside town of Puerto Vallarta There's more than just sunny days in this port town

Pacific Paradise

BRENDA NUNEZ
LIFE@METRONEWS.CA

'Vallarta', as locals call it, is a quaint village nestled in Banderas Bay that opens out into the Pacific Ocean. One of Mexico's most cosmopolitan cities, it's also the country's gay capital. Blessed with year round warm temperatures, the sparkling seaside town is a breath of fresh air compared to the capital Mexico City.

A hot spot for sea and art lovers, there is beauty in everything you see from the red tiled houses, cobbled streets and ocean views. Although a major tourist destination, Vallarta has managed to stay clear of clichés and remains in essence a quiet fishing village.

BRENDA NUÑEZ

First time?

On top of the endless stretch of pristine coastline, there are plenty of outdoor activities to keep you busy here. Go horseback riding along the coast, deep sea diving or fishing or for a jeep ride through the jungle. Bring some binoculars with you so that you can do a bit of bird watching at the same time. If you're brave enough, go bungee jumping into the ocean (vallarta-adventures.com). Nature lovers will enjoy a trip to the Botanical Gardens (vbgardens.org), where they will find out more about local flowers including orchids. Or go for a walk in the chocolate, coffee and vanilla garden. Spend a relaxing morning playing golf at Punta Mita Golf club at the Four Season's Hotel (fourseasons.com) or simply sunbathe at Playa Camarones (Shrimp Beach).

Been there before?

Soak up the sun at Playa Los Muertos beach, a favourite of the gay scene, or head to Mismaloya, where you can walk along the same stretch of sand where Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton filmed The Night of the Iguana in 1964.

Discover the area's unique art and culture, an integral part of daily life that isn't just limited to Vallarta's galleries but reflected in every aspect of local architecture.

The seafront walkway is adorned with beautiful sculptures: highlights include the famous Arcos arches or the Caballito sculpture of a boy on the back of a seahorse.

If you want to learn more about the local Huichol culture, visit Nueva Valle, in the neighbouring state of Nayarit.

There you can buy beautifully crafted jewelry and leather bags.

BRENDA NUÑEZ

▶ Soaking up the sun

Shop

The best place to buy local souvenirs is the historic Rio Cuale Market near the Cuale River. Here you will find plenty of Huichol culture arts and crafts as well as mainstream beach dresses and wrestling masks. Shopping malls, including Galerias Vallarta Maritime and the Plaza Peninsula, are great for getting more generic souvenirs. If it's jewelry and antiques you're after, go for a stroll along the Malecón boardwalk.

BRENDA NUÑEZ

▶ Market crafts

Eat and drink!

For a traditional breakfast, head to Mama Rosa (mamarosavallarta.com). Their refried beans, empanadas and café de olla (cinnamon coffee) are the perfect start to the day. El Brujo is another great option, especially if you're a fan of molcajetes (steak, onions and white cheese in pepper sauce served with flour tortilla, beans and guacamole). Restaurant La Leche, owned by chef Alfonso Cadena (lalecherestaurant.com) is perfect for a late lunch or dinner. The decor is quirky; milk cans adorn the shelves and the food is always a surprise with a new menu is posted every night. Have a shot of tequila at La Casa del Tequila, which has more than 50 flavours to choose from.

3 life

Travel in brief

Eight casinos on the Las Vegas Strip are planning a co-ordinated fireworks show as part of Sin City's annual New Year's Eve celebration. Officials said Wednesday that more than 56,000 effects will light up the sky as part of a nearly nine-minute show featuring a medley of songs including LMFAO's Party Rock Anthem. Eight casinos will be used as firing locations: Tropicana Las Vegas, MGM Grand, Aria, Planet Hollywood, Caesars Palace, Treasure Island, the Venetian and the Stratosphere. Tourism officials at the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority say they expect 315,000 people to celebrate the milestone in Las Vegas. Fremont Street Experience and Fremont Street East also plan celebrations downtown.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cancun rated cheapest Caribbean destination, Saint Barthelemy the priciest

A sweet ending to the holidays

This unique upside down cake is a nice escape from your typical frosted Christmas treats

EMILY RICHARDS

▶ This recipe serves 12.

HOLIDAY HELPER

EMILY RICHARDS
FOOD@METRONEWS.CA

This stunning cake brings the sweet and vanilla scented flavour of birch syrup to pears, and it would work just as well with firm baking apples.

The dark colour of pure birch syrup enhances the cake and adds a unique flavour. Try it in other baking where you would use vanilla extract as a start.

You can make this cake ahead up to two days and warm it up slightly before serving it with a dollop of whipped cream and a sprinkle of cinnamon

Ingredients:

- ½ cup (125 mL) butter, softened
- ¾ cup (175 mL) packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) vanilla
- 1-1/2 cups (375 mL) all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp (5 mL) ground cardamom or cinnamon
- 1 tsp (5 mL) baking powder
- ½ tsp (2 mL) baking soda
- Pinch salt
- ½ cup (125 mL) sour cream

Pear Topping:

- ⅓ cup (75 mL) pure birch syrup
- ¼ cup (50 mL) packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup (50 mL) chopped toasted pecans
- 3 ripe Bosc or Bartlett pears

Preparation:

1 Pear Topping: In saucepan, heat birch syrup, brown sugar over medium-high heat until it begins to bubble. Boil gently for 1 minute, stirring. Pour into greased 9-inch (23 cm) cake pan. Sprinkle with pecans.

2 Peel, quarter and core pears. Slice pears into about ¼ inch (5 mm) thick slices, lengthwise. Arrange over maple mixture in concentric circles overlapping each other slightly. Set aside.

3 In bowl, beat butter and sugar until fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beating after each addition. Beat in vanilla. In another bowl, combine flour, cardamom, baking powder, soda and salt. Alternately, stir flour mix and sour cream into butter mix making 3 additions of flour and 2 of sour cream until combined (batter will be thick).

4 Scrape into cake pan over pears. Smooth batter carefully without moving pears. Bake in 350°F (180°C) oven 40 mins. or until tester inserted in centre comes out clean. Let cool in pan 20 mins.

5 Invert cake pan onto serving plate and turn over, removing cake pan. Scrape any pear topping from the pan onto cake.

EMILY RICHARDS IS A PROFESSIONAL HOME ECONOMIST, COOKBOOK AUTHOR & TV CELEBRITY CHEF. FOR MORE, VISIT EMILYRICHARDSCOOKS.CA

Holiday prep

We're here to help

This is the final edition of Emily Richard's Holiday Helper. Check out metronews.ca/food for past editions.

Drink of the week

Christmas Coffee

It's the holidays. You don't have to work, so why not make your caffeine fix a little more festive?

- 1 oz Bailey's Mint Chocolate
- .25 oz Frangelico
- .25 oz Kahlua
- Hot coffee

Stir everything with freshly brewed coffee in a large, tempered glass. Top with whipped cream — homemade tastes better, but the canned stuff will look prettier — and sprinkle with shaved dark chocolate and candy cane crumble. Replace the last two liqueurs with Irish whiskey if the sun's already set. **JOE HOWELL, TORONTO BARTENDER**

JOE HOWELL

A delicious and classic party offering

While most people opt for a store-bought version, French Onion Dip isn't difficult to make from scratch

MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ This recipe serves 16.

Always a family favourite, this herb enhanced onion dip is delicious served up with kettle chips as a classic, but try it with fresh cut veggies or use it as a new dip idea for chicken or steak or a spread for a new crostini idea.

Ingredients:

- 30 ml (2 tbsp) olive oil
- 2 large sweet onions, sliced
- 4 shallots, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 5 ml (1 tsp) salt
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tub (500 g) low-fat cottage cheese
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) chopped fresh thyme
- 10 ml (2 tsp) chopped fresh marjoram
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) chopped fresh chives

Preparation:

1 In a large skillet heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onions, shallots, garlic, salt and pepper and cook for 15 to 18 minutes, stirring occasionally or until onions are browned and caramelized. If garlic begins to brown too much, add a few tablespoons of water and continue cooking.

2 Let mixture cool for 10 minutes, then transfer to a food processor and puree until smooth. Add cottage cheese, thyme and marjoram. Purée again until smooth. Stir in chopped chives.

3 Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate for at least an hour for flavours to meld.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ ADAPTED BY EMILY RICHARDS (PROFESSIONAL HOME ECONOMIST, COOKBOOK AUTHOR AND A TV CELEBRITY CHEF. FOR MORE, VISIT EMILYRICHARDSCOOKS.CA)

Mix learning with living it up

One student weighs in on the importance of balancing work and play while piecing through post-secondary

STUDENT VOICE

AYSHA KHALIQ
TALENTEGG.CA

I moved to Nova Scotia to attend school full-time. Cape Breton University (CBU) has an awesome business school where I didn't only study and learn, but I also enjoyed my life more than I ever had before.

There are many reasons why I call my time there the best days of my life. If I have to explain in a few lines, what I loved the most was the super friendly learning environment, highly qualified teachers with a lot of experience, the library — such a good source of research in physical and electronic forms, the sports complex with many free-of-cost facilities and last but not least my residence.

When I moved to Cape Breton, I did not know a single person there. In the beginning, I was quite concerned what my life would be like there without family and friends.

However, surprisingly, when I left the university, I knew many people from security guards, café workers, librarians to professors and students and I was filled with good memories from all of them. Now I am very blessed to have a big circle of wonderful family and friends on the other side of Canada too.

▶ Aysha Khaliq believes schools should have more programs in place to help students assess what direction they'd like to head in after graduation.

In the beginning of my last semester, I started applying for different jobs and I focused on the specific industry I was interested in.

Since I had started looking early, I had enough time to find the right place in a specific industry and find the right job.

In October 2010, I graduated with an MBA and the Valedictorian designation from Cape Breton University and a few job offers.

I believe schools should have a special program in the last two semesters of graduate studies in order to help students figure out what they want to do in the future. If students have the right plan from the start, it helps them to get into the right industry too.

In general, my advice for students would be that our university days won't come back. We should have as much fun as we can. However, at the same time opportunity won't knock on the door again and again.

We should try to balance getting good grades, building networks, and enjoying our time.

TALENTEGG.CA, CANADA'S ONLINE CAREER RESOURCE FOR STUDENTS AND RECENT GRADS, WANTS TO HEAR YOUR STUDENT VOICE. SHARE IT AT TALENTEGG.CA.

Where Aysha is now

Before my graduation, I was offered a few positions. I took my time making a decision and kept the idea of career advancement in my mind. Finally, I accepted a personal banking officer position at Scotiabank.

What I learned

Key take-aways from Aysha's experience

- Travel for school and work while you can. It might seem scary at first, but you'll learn and grow a lot!
- Plan the next steps in your career or education before you graduate so you're not stuck with nothing to do.
- Try to stay balanced in everything that you do — success takes hard work, networking and fun.

University gets ruff

Schools going to the dogs? Dorms welcoming pets

BRUCE WALSH
LIFE@METRONEWS.CA
MWN IN PHILADELPHIA

Over the last decade, the number of pet-friendly dorms has been on the rise, albeit at a caged snail's pace. In 2010 the New York Times put the number of campuses with pet-friendly housing at just 12, and most were small, private colleges.

But 2012 may prove to be the tipping point, as many administrators in university housing say this is the hottest topic in their field.

"In local meetings of [the Association of College and University] Housing Officers, we are often the institution that people are looking for answers from on this issue," says Ben Falter, the director of housing at Stetson University in Florida. Stetson currently has 60 pet-friendly individual units on campus. "People are really pressing to know how to do it and how it's working for us."

ISTOCK

▶ Throw me a bone, will ya?

Stetson became pet-friendly in 2010, after incoming president Wendy B. Libby pressed the issue. Libby is the former president of Stephens College, ranked second-most pet-friendly school in the nation by Petside.com.

But even at the most liberal colleges, many administrators still see pitfalls.

"We had a lot of discussion around things like, will dorms be inspected to ensure that animals are well cared for? Who will be responsible for that? How will we set standards?" says Unity College's assistant professor of wildlife, Sarah Cunningham. Unity decided against pet-friendly dorms this year.

"You have to have a plan to make sure you're taking care of these animals humanely if, as a college, you're going to be responsible for students having animals."

All money raised in the Christmas Kettles stays in the local community in which it was raised to support programs for people in need.
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4 sports

Sports in brief

The London Lightning improved their position atop the NBL of Canada in P.E.I. Tuesday night, but not without resistance from the Summerside Storm.
The Lightning (12-3) needed a big 19 points from former NBA small forward Rodney Buford to pull away from Summerside (5-10) with a 107-98 win. London had seven players finish in double figures, including DeAnthony Bowden, who returned to the Lightning roster from an ankle injury to score 18 points.

Scan code for more sports.

JEFF BOTTARI/GETTY IMAGES

▶ The Texas Rangers have won the rights to negotiate with Yu Darvish.

Jays GM stays quiet on Yu

Anthopoulos won't even confirm if Toronto made a bid on Darvish, but sources inside baseball say team offered more than $50 million Focus is in on trade market, GM says

A rare baseball buzz was built in Toronto over the last week after reports indicated the Blue Jays were a contender in the Yu Darvish sweepstakes.

Instead, the Texas Rangers secured the negotiating rights to the Japanese pitcher Monday night with a record bid worth a reported $51.7 million US. Sources in baseball insist that the Jays' bid for the 25-year-old Japanese star was over $50 million.

With the bid process generating plenty of ink, Blue Jays general manager Alex Anthopoulos held a conference call Tuesday to address a flood of interview requests.

"It's not a bottomless pit. I have what I have available and I'm going to make that work and we're going to try to put a competitive and world championship club on the field."
GM ALEX ANTHOPOULOS ON THE JAYS' BUDGET

However, Anthopoulos had little to say and wouldn't confirm whether the Blue Jays even put in a bid.

"I try to operate close to the vest when it comes to free agency and things like that," Anthopoulos said. "And I think it's worked to our advantage in a lot of ways in our ability to make trades and so on. I think I've been consistent with what our plans have been, that our desire first and foremost is to try to explore the trade market.

"We won't rule out the free-agent market, but right now with where we're at and what we have to work with, the trade market makes more sense for us and that hasn't changed."

For many fans, Toronto's reported interest in Darvish brought back memories of the team's glory days when the team was a contender in the American League East and a player in big-name acquisitions.

The fact the Jays were believed to be in the mix was a big change for a team that has watched its wallet in recent years as free-spending clubs like New York and Boston have jumped at big-name free agents.

THE CANADIAN PRESS WITH FILES FROM TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

NEED A NEW JOB OR CAREER?
Read metro work every Monday & Wednesday.

Cargo

The interior has been given the update treatment, providing a slightly enlarged passenger area but at the expense of slightly reduced cargo volume.

This time, though, maximizing the load floor is a snap with the new fold-down rear seat that operates by flipping a pair of levers located just inside the tailgate.

Fuel consumption

Fuel consumption has improved to 9.0 l/100 km city and 6.4 highway for front-wheel-drive models (formerly 10.5/7.3). All-wheel-drive models are rated at 9.2 l/100 km city and 6.6 highway (previously 10.1/7.5).

The improvements are attributed to a new anti-friction coating for the pistons, a faster-activating on-demand AWD system as well as a revised five-speed automatic transmission.

Engine, steering

Getting CR-V owners to work, the gym, or the daycare is a revised 2.4-litre four-cylinder engine that makes 185 horsepower and 163 pound-feet of torque, which is slightly more than the previous 2.4.

From observation, Honda engineers have largely succeeded at smoothing out the CR-V's ride and creating a quieter interior. On the down side, the newly installed "Motion-Adaptive" electric power-assisted steering (called EPAS) feels a bit numb, especially when driving straight down the highway.

▶ Subtle changes are sometimes the best: reorganizing a few lines at the back creates this dramatic profile.

Honda CR-V: Resculpted not recreated

MALCOLM GUNN
DRIVE@METRONEWS.CA
WHEELBASE MEDIA

Calling all cool moms; your new fourth-generation Honda CR-V chariot awaits.

Of course Honda's popular tall wagon isn't just for active women with toddlers in tow, but according to the automaker, the "cool moms" segment makes up, or significantly influences, the largest portion of CR-V buyers. They, along with others seeking a roomy ride with all-weather, all-road capability, will appreciate the vehicle's car-like behaviour and economical operation.

CR-V devotees will not easily spot the latest version of Honda's compact "cute ute" since it closely mirrors the outgoing version in all key exterior dimensions.

What's more, the general shape remains only moderately tinkered-with, including updated nose and tail section plus a more dramatically shaped rear roof pillar that introduces a bit more drama to the vehicle's styling. Honda claims that the new CR-V's shape, along with modifications to the undercarriage to increase air flow, has reduced fuel-robbing aerodynamic drag by eight per cent.

Honda seems content with not rocking the boat with its latest CR-V, perhaps sensing that the time isn't quite right to introduce a totally clean-sheet design.

The cool-mom crowd would likely agree.

5 drive

By comparison

Chevrolet Equinox
Base price: $27,800
Stylish, roomy wagon specializes in a quiet ride and impressive fuel numbers.

Nissan Rogue
Base price: $25,400
Looks like a smaller version of Nissan's Murano, which is a bonus.

Hyundai Santa Fe
Base price: $25,800
Conservative looks, but a solidly built standout with optional V-6 power.
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CAR JOURNEYS PART OF THE HOLIDAY EXPERIENCE

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DRIVE
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It's perfectly fine that the vehicle's main role during the holidays is helping us get to where we want to be, like with our families, or extremely far away from our families where there is also a good beach.

We don't need to start stringing lights on every Ford Taurus, or going with eggnog-flavoured 5W30 engine oil over the holidays.

That would be forcing it if you ask me — like attaching fake antlers to a cat.

Like everybody, my most vivid memories of driving to a family Christmas event occurred when I was a kid, when Christmas was feverishly crucial.

Unfortunately the drives that stick out the most were the long ones to my uncle's farm up north.

Back then I routinely got car sick, so I remember a few times standing beside the car in the snow on some back road, in full puke mode. Hey, not every memory has to be a stupendously good one. The important thing is that they're memorable enough to lodge in your memory for the long haul.

Christmas Eve 17 years ago, when our daughter was just a year old, we stayed overnight at my mother's home, the ancestral bungalow in the suburbs. As usual, the kid refused to go to sleep at the appointed time — a habit she manages to maintain to this day. When she was still screaming well past midnight, I did what all fathers do under such circumstances — buckled her into the car seat, and drove around aimlessly until she fell asleep. Driving around my old hometown, in the dead quiet of Christmas night, decorations and lights everywhere, daughter in the back slowly falling asleep, well … it wasn't the worst half hour I ever spent behind the wheel.

These days we have to make a relatively short run on Christmas Eve, about an hour door to door.

Simple, right? And with no chance of vomit? Well, thankfully nausea is no longer in the picture, but things are far from simple. Trying not to forget and pack every present, trying to leave on time with four people with four different agendas, and trying to properly secure a broccoli casserole and Greek salad somewhere in the cargo area, is exhaustive and tricky stuff. But that's precisely why there is such euphoria when we're finally on our way. Nothing left to do but enjoy the ride, hope there is no Feta cheese disaster in the trunk, and look forward to the festivities that will soon unfold.

ISTOCK

▶ Chances are your vehicle will be involved in some sort of memory you create during the holidays.

Not every memory has to be a stupendously good one. The important thing is that they're memorable enough to lodge in your memory for the long haul.

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metro

Hyundai XG delivered affordable luxury

SECOND GEAR

JUSTIN PRITCHARD
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Like the Azera and Genesis that came after it, the Hyundai XG350 aimed to give shoppers a cut-price taste of the automotive high-life.

Sure, it's a cheap Korean knock-off luxury car, but in a good way.

Hyundai created a luxurious atmosphere, installed plenty of hardware and priced the entire thing for the relative masses.

2001-2005 Hyundai XG350

Engine

Look for a 3.5-litre V-6 engine, automatic transmission and front-wheel drive in all models — other than the 2001.

For that year, the car was called the XG300, due to its smaller 3-litre, 190-horsepower V-6.

What owners like

Owners like the XG's ride, interior styling, comfort levels and generous equipment list. Few reported issues with interior roominess or trunk space. Styling was also typically rated highly.

What owners dislike

Common complaints include road noise, a dim instrument panel and sub-par audio components.

Fuel mileage is also rated somewhat poorly.

Common issues

Several owners report niggling electronic and sensor-related issues, so ensure all accessories function as expected and look for any "Check Engine" or "Airbag/SRS" lights in the instrument cluster.

Note the engine's performance, particularly when accelerating from a stop. Some owners report inconsistent responses from the throttle, ranging from "lurching" off the line to a lack of power. This may be accompanied by trouble codes or a check-engine light.

Verdict

The main draw to the XG350 as a used car should be its price. Have the vehicle inspected by a Hyundai mechanic and spend a bit of the cost savings on the extended warranty, if available.

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▲Ratings of "Good" are the highest rating awarded for 40-mph frontal offset, 31-mph side-impact and 20-mph rear-impact crash tests conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) (www.iihs.org). A "Good" rating obtained in all three crash tests plus a "Good" rating in new roof strength testing and the availability of Electronic Stability Control (ESC) (Vehicle Dynamics Control) achieves a 2011 Top Safety Pick. *Based on ALG's 2011 Residual Value Award for Best Mainstream Brand. †When you purchase, lease or finance a new 2012/2011 Forester, you will receive a $500 holiday bonus which can be applied towards options, accessories, down payment or monthly payments on an eligible 2012/2011 Forester at the time of purchase, lease or finance. Credits are inclusive of applicable taxes and will be applied, as applicable, to relevant monthly lease or finance payment or purchase price at dealership. Offer applies to vehicles delivered on or before January 4, 2012. All current stackable consumer cash incentives have been applied to the lease offers, dealer contribution may be required. *MSRP of $25,995 on 2012 Forester 2.5X (CJ1 XJ). Lease for $298 a month for 24 months with $2,495 down. 2.9% lease rate. $3,158.34 due at signing. Option to purchase at end of lease is $18,795. Advertised pricing consists of MSRP plus charges for Freight/PDI ($1,595), Air Tax ($100), Tire Stewardship Levy ($29.20), OMVIC Fee ($5), Dealer Admin ($199). Freight/PDI charge includes a full tank of gas. Taxes, licence, registration and insurance are extra. $0 security deposit. Model shown: 2011 Forester 2.5X Convenience Package (BJ2 CP). MSRP of $28,095. Dealers may sell or lease for less or may have to order or trade. Offers applicable on approved credit at participating dealers only. Lease based on a maximum of 24,000 km per year, with excess charged at $0.10/km. Leasing and financing programs available through Subaru Financial Services by TCCI. Other lease and finance rates and terms available; down payment or equivalent trade-in may be required. Vehicle shown solely for purposes of illustration, and may not be equipped exactly as shown. Offers available until January 4, 2012. See your local Subaru dealer for complete program details.

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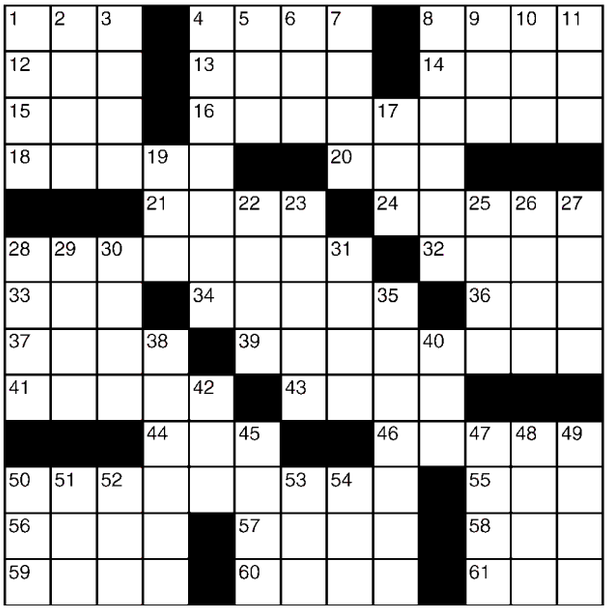
Crossword



Across
1 Foul
4 Supporters
8 Easter entrees
12 Actress Gardner
13 Somewhat
14 Shrek, e.g.
15 Trawler need
16 Jail
18 18th president
20 Obtained
21 Verdi opera
24 Intrinsically
28 Arab's hooded cloak
32 Clarinet insert
33 Anger
34 — Dame
36 Mr. Hammarskjöld
37 Culture medium
39 Rikki-Tikki-Tavi is one
41 Old photograph hue
43 Rules, for short
44 Have
46 Cowboy's greeting
50 1984 movie remade in 2011
55 Fish eggs
56 Inlet
57 Met melody
58 The whole enchilada
59 Burn some
60 Drove
61 Energy

Down
1 Gunshot sound
2 State with certainty
3 Information
4 Clique
5 Lawyers' org.
6 Zero
7 Sans escort
8 Owl, at times
9 Past
10 "— Doubtfire"
11 Catch a glimpse of
17 Jazz style
19 A Bobbsey twin
22 Dire prophecy
23 Titanic VIP
25 Start over
26 Red and Black
27 Lip
28 Diagonal
29 Press on
30 Harvest
31 Coastal flier
35 Highbrow
38 Hooligan
40 Bear, in Barcelona
42 Piercing tool
45 Biblical boatwright
47 Finish a film shoot
48 Clinton's 1996 opponent
49 Shrill bark
50 Media watchdog org.
51 Reaction to fireworks
52 Eggs in a lab
53 Raw rock
54 Round Table address

▶ Yesterday's answer

E	P	I	C			E	D	G	E			S	U	P
M	I	C	A			T	E	E	M			P	R	O
S	P	E	C	T	A	C	L	E				E	G	O
				T	A	L	K			R	A	C	E	R
G	A	S	U	P				B	A	L	I			
R	I	P	S			S	K	I	L	I	F	T	S	
A	D	E			P	L	E	A	D			I	R	A
S	E	C	T	I	O	N	S			D	E	U	S	
			I	O	N	E				S	I	D	E	S
G	I	M	M	E			L	A	M	A				
O	D	E			S	P	E	C	U	L	A	T	E	
T	E	N			A	H	E	M			U	N	I	T
H	A	S			P	I	K	E			P	A	T	H

Sudoku

		9	2		6		7	
5		6	8	1		2		
	4						6	3
9			4		8		5	6
	6			2			9	
4	8		9		5			1
1	9						8	
		4		8	7	9		2
	3		6		2	5		

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's answer ▶

3	7	2	5	4	1	8	6	9
1	8	6	2	7	9	5	3	4
4	5	9	6	3	8	7	1	2
8	3	7	9	5	2	6	4	1
2	9	1	4	8	6	3	7	5
5	6	4	3	1	7	2	9	8
9	4	8	7	6	5	1	2	3
6	1	3	8	2	4	9	5	7
7	2	5	1	9	3	4	8	6

Send a KISS

You can now post your kiss, and read even more kisses, online at metronews.ca/kiss.

A Spaceman, Consummation has begun and I am your guide. Together we unlock the secrets of the stars. Your signal is fading. You are... my love. **A NIGHT OWL**

My Prince, Every morning is a wonderful morning waking up with you next to me! I love everything about you, think of you always and miss you when your gone. **YOUR DIRTY GIRL**

RJ Romeo, I miss you babe and I can't wait for you to come home to me for x-mas....I miss you and love you lots more than you'll ever know. **UR BABIEE**

Hubbyxoxo :P , Heyy idk why ur friends saying im pissed off at chu cause im not and w.e his name is idk him i never talked to him -.- btww I like you alot!!!!! :P 10/04/11 **WIFEYXOXOX :P**

Today's horoscope

For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

♈ Aries March 21-April 20 It may seem as if things are going wrong and there is little you can do about it, but it's all part of a wider plan.

♉ Taurus April 21-May 21 If you have a well defined goal and a sensible plan, you really cannot lose.

♊ Gemini May 22-June 21 You need to talk over your problems with someone you know will lend a sympathetic ear.

♋ Cancer June 22-July 22 Is that the real you the world can see? Or is it one of your masks? If it's the latter don't forget that you are playing a role.

♌ Leo July 23-Aug.23 Look for ways to co-operate with those you work and do business with. You have wasted far too much time trying to outdo each other.

♍ Virgo Aug. 24- Sept. 22 You have become a bit too set in your ways of late and what happens today will bring that fact home.

♎ Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23 Concentrate on the things that matter and don't waste time on each and every passing distraction.

♏ Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22 You may feel out of touch with the spirit of the times, but is that bad?

♐ Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21 After all the exertions of recent weeks, you are entitled to a little down time. Let life come to you.

♑ Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 20 What you own and what you earn may be important to you but don't worry yourself sick about it.

♒ Aquarius Jan. 21-Feb. 18 If you have a good idea — and chances are you have a brilliant one — get started on it now.

♓ Pisces Feb. 19-March 20. Don't take colleagues' negative remarks to heart because they don't mean them. **SALLY BROMPTON**

Caption contest

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